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Seymour made these accusations without providing any documentation, and with good reason, for outside of Stalinist hagiographies, Stalin-era fiction like Shuslov's *And Quiet Flows the Don* and Seymour's air-brush-happy imagination no evidence exists to support his claims. Surviving partisans of the Makhnovist movement, like Makhno's comrade the ex-Bolshevik Peter Arshinov in his *History of the Makhnovist Movement*, the anarchist historian Voline in his work *The Unknown Revolution*, and independent historians who are not friends



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of revolution or anarchism, like Stanford scholar Michael Palij, in his book *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno*, all affirm that:

1. The Makhnovist Movement was a mass revolutionary movement of the poor in the Southern Ukraine, and fielded an army of several tens of thousands of partisans in the Russian Civil War. This revolutionary movement lasted from the spring of 1918 until a final large-scale massacre of its partisans, and large numbers of non-combatant sympathizers, by the Bolsheviks in 1921.
2. Revolutionaries of Jewish origins played an important part in the Makhnovist movement, among them Voline. He was a key figure in the anarcho-communist "Nabat" confederation in the Ukraine during the Russian Civil War.
3. Jewish communities in the Ukraine furnished numerous combatants to Makhno's Insurrectionary Army. Jewish communities participated in regional revolutionary mass assemblies of workers, peasants and partisans called by the Revolutionary Military Council of the Makhnovist Army.
4. The Makhnovists named one of their free-communist agricultural communes after Rosa Luxemburg, who was from a Jewish background.
5. Nestor Makhno and his comrades issued numerous proclamations against anti-Semitism.

On several occasions Makhno himself killed instigators of violence against the Jewish population, including a prominent bandit named Grigor'ev. (See Arshinov's *History of the Makhnovist Movement*, pp. 135-137.)

6. Leah Feldman, who died in London in the late 1980's, was the last known survivor of the Makhno movement in the west. As a young girl, Feldman helped sew uniforms for the Makhnovist Army. Feldman was from a Jewish background. She vehemently attested to the Makhnovists' violent hostility to anti-Semitism.

In *The Unknown Revolution* (p. 698), Voline quotes a Jewish historian, M. Tcherikover, interviewed in Paris, who was not an anarchist or a revolutionary:

" It is undeniable that, of all these armies, including the (so-called) Red Army, the Makhnovists behaved best with regard to the civil population in general and the Jewish population in particular...Do not let us speak of pogroms alleged to have been organized by Makhno himself. This is a slander or an error. Nothing of the sort occurred. " [my italics].

With regard to Seymour's claim that the Makhnovists " ...collaborated with White armies against the Bolsheviks":

1. The Makhno Movement began as a class struggle of the exploited and dispossessed against the rich in the Southern Ukraine in the spring of 1918. Makhno and his comrades helped initiate the seizure and redistribution of the wealth of rich exploiters by poor folks. Exploiters who resisted were killed.
2. Makhno fought against Austrian and German Imperialist forces and their allies among the local gentry, as opposed to the Bolshevik regime, who collaborated with these enemies of the world revolution by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. Makhno's forces played a key role in the defeat of the Austro-German invasion of the Ukraine and in the defeat of the Ukrainian nationalist regime of Petliura in 1918.
3. Makhno's forces destroyed a significant portion of the White army General Denikin's forces in September and October 1919, thus crippling Denikin's attempt at that time to take Moscow. (The Whites were the right-wing counterrevolutionary forces in the Russian Civil War)
4. Makhno's forces played the decisive part in the defeat of the White general Wrangel in late 1920. At that time an agreement was made between the Bolshevik state, signed by Frunze and Bela Kun, and the revolutionaries of the Makhno movement, where Makhno's forces were considered to be effectively a part of the so-called Red Army. This agreement is reproduced in Arshinov and

Voline's works. Earlier, in May of 1919, the leading Bolshevik Lev Kamenev had journeyed to Makhno's headquarters and negotiated in person with Makhno.

The Bolsheviks are the only counterrevolutionaries the Makhnovists can be accurately accused of collaborating with.

Space considerations prohibit me from describing in great detail the counterrevolutionary treachery displayed by the Bolsheviks with regard to the Makhnovists. But anyone who reads the sources mentioned above and who also reads of how the Stalinists behaved during the Spanish Civil War will see many similarities.

Seymour peddled a similar combination of ignorance and falsehoods about the German left communists of the early 1920's and one of their organizations, the Communist Workers Party of Germany (KAPD). Far from being, as Seymour puts it, an "*unstable amalgam of anarchist and Communist politics*", left communism was a sophisticated Marxist current with deep roots among combative wage workers and poor people in Germany and Holland. The Dutch Marxist theoreticians Anton Pannekoek, Herman Gorter and their comrades began developing a far-going critique of European social democracy in the decades before World War One.

The left communists saw that any usefulness that had been played by electoral politics and trade unions had passed. In a revolutionary period proletarians would have to fight for the destruction of the bourgeois state and the abolition of wage labor and commodity relations outside of and against all pro-capitalist workers' organizations. A new historical period meant that new tactics had become necessary, and new forms of self-organization had emerged that superseded the old dichotomy of parliamentary activity and unions. These were unitary expressions of proletarian power: soviets, workers, soldiers and sailor's councils, mass assemblies combining political and economic aspects of the fight against capital.

Vulgar Marxists like Trotskyists, and the Stalinists they often cheer for, will say that unions

"organize workers", but the question posed by authentically anti-capitalist revolutionaries like the German communist left was a qualitative one: what do they organize the working class for?

Trade unions and leftist parties act in the interests of the capitalist system. They are organizations of proletarian defeat; they were then, they are now. As opposed to what Trotskyists claim, pro-wage-labor leftist parties and unions are not "betrayers" or

"misleaders" of the working class -- they are the left wing of capital, a fundamental element of the capitalist political apparatus.

Working class self-organization means taking action outside of and against the control of unions, parties and electoral politics. The best revolutionaries who came out of Trotskyism after World War Two recognized this. For example, see the writings of Grandizo Munis.

Munis was a leading member of the Trotskyists' Bolshevik-Leninist Group, which fought alongside of the anarchist revolutionaries of the "*Friends of Durruti*" group in the May 1937

uprising in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. After World War Two, Munis described labor unions as "*auxiliary organs of capital*" and noted that:

"...unions...function as messengers from capital to labor and as agents who help to adapt labor to the requirements of capital...Unions, having a bureaucratic and legal life of their

own, merely use the working class as a docile mass to manipulate in order to increase their own power as a legal institution in our society. Unions and working people have completely different daily lives and motivations. Any 'tactical' work within (the union apparatus), even if guided by the purest intentions, will impede the self-activity of the exploited class, destroying their fighting spirit and barring the way to revolutionary activity.

"Lenin and Trotsky's position on revolutionary work within unions is entirely outside the realm of today's realities...There is about as much possibility of 'changing' unions in a revolutionary direction as there is of 'changing' capitalist society in general; unions use wage workers for their own particular end but wage workers will never be able to make unions serve a revolutionary goal; they must destroy them." (from *Unions Against Revolution*, by G.

Munis, available in some anarchist bookstores or for \$1 from Black and Red, P. O. Box 02374, Detroit, Michigan 48202).

Lenin's and Trotsky's vision of the content of socialism and the tactics that could be used in achieving it did not break fundamentally with the pre-World War I social democratic ideology of the Second International. Their equation of the content of socialism with, to quote Lenin in 1918, "a state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the entire people" helped to destroy the revolutionary movement of their day.

During World War One the Bolsheviks were a key part of the international revolutionary movement. In 1917 they regrouped many of the most combative elements of the proletarian movement in the urban centers of Russia. But shortly after the October Revolution the overwhelming circumstances of the Russian Civil War, and the pronounced deficiencies of their politics, led the Bolsheviks to pass over to the side of the counterrevolution. This tendency was resisted unsuccessfully by dissident currents within the party that had some authentically communist content, the "left communists" and the "democratic centralists." But these minority tendencies had no lasting impact on the party. As early as 1921, the founding manifesto of the short-lived (left communist) Communist Workers International declared:

" Nothing can stop the flow of events, or obscure the truth. We are saying this without useless reticence, without sentimentalism: proletarian Russia of red October is becoming a bourgeois state. "

By the time of the Kronstadt massacre in March 1921 the Russian Revolution was dead. To the German left communists the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is a fundamental and necessary element of revolutionary politics, meant the absolute social power of the revolutionary mass movement itself against the capitalist system, and against those who would defend it or restore it. The Makhnovist movement was an excellent example of this principle put into practice; a mass movement of the poor acting in a despotic manner against exploiters and counterrevolutionaries. For the Bolsheviks the bottom line became one of holding onto state power at any cost. The Bolshevik victory came at the expense of the possibility of revolution in Germany and Italy. It came at the expense of revolutionary forces that weren't under their control, like the Makhnovists, and at the expense of the working class in the urban areas of Russia, who were driven out of active participation in political life by the police terror of the Bolshevik party-state.

The Kronstadt uprising was the last cry of the dying revolutionary movement in

Russia. By 1921 the Lenin regime wasn't a dictatorship of the proletariat, it was just a dictatorship; a clique claiming to act in the name of the working class while using terror against the working class. When the German left fought for "the dictatorship of the proletariat" they didn't mean a police state that would impose wage labor on the laboring classes and force the development of industrialization and state capitalism at their expense, which is what the Bolsheviks ended up doing.

The Spart's Joseph Seymour was undoubtedly right when he quoted the American Trotskyist James Cannon bragging that Lenin's polemic "*Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*"

banished the left communists' perspective from an effective presence in the workers'

movement in the US and elsewhere. From the early 1920's on, the Leninist attachment to pre-World War I social democratic tactics like electoral politics and political activity within pro-capitalist labor unions dominated the perspectives of the so-called Communists. But if these tactics were correct ones, why did they lead to such a dismal set of results?

The revolutionary movement of the inter-war period was defeated. The defeat of the revolutionary movement was accompanied by the rise of fascism and Stalinism, and 50

million people died in the imperialist Second World War. Leninism didn't result in even a single successful proletarian revolution. Leninism didn't give rise to a society anywhere in the world worthy of the human beings that live in it.

Today capitalism rules in every country. But not in the befogged consciousness of Trotskyists, who, in their terminal fealty to Stalinism and need to compensate for their own total historical failure obscenely describe regimes that exploit, imprison and murder wage laborers in Cuba, North Korea, and China as "workers' states".

Trotskyism isn't a theoretical tool for understanding and changing reality, but a dogma, an impoverished and sterile amalgam of social democracy and Stalinism; an ersatz "socialism"

devoid of social content. Trotskyism is a religion trip worshipping Lenin and

Trotsky, around whom all history is made to revolve in a Ptolemaic system. It's fitting that when confronted by a revolutionary movement like the Makhnovists, Trotskyists parrot the line of the Stalinists, the more successful fellow worshipers of the Lenin mummy-cult. Trotskyism is Stalinism's loyal opposition. Since no Trotskyist movement has ever taken power anywhere, Trotskyists have compensated by being cheerleaders for Stalinism and pro-capitalist "national liberation" movements, forces the Trots have more in common with than class war anarcho-communists like Makhno and the left communists of the KAPD.

The defeat of the Russian Revolution, and the Leninist ideology that flowed from that defeat, led the revolutionary possibilities of the 20th century into a total historical dead-end. The main historical legacy of Leninism is a globally defeated and disoriented proletariat. The working class doesn't hold power anywhere today. But now we can see the world in a different, demystified light. New opportunities will present themselves in the coming decades. We have to utterly destroy the capitalist world order, demolish it totally, without equivocations or compromises. We can't let the future be held hostage by the failures of the past.

**With Kronstadt and Makhno against Lenin and Trotsky,
for worldwide anti-statist communist revolution**